



Duane “Mike” Smith

Groveland City Council Member, District 4



Volume 3 - Issue #1

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E-mail: [mike.smith@groveland-fl.gov](mailto:mike.smith@groveland-fl.gov)

Phone:  
352-251-6048

Volume 3 - Issue #1

A Happy New Year to everyone and may you find this new year one of good health and happiness.

A lot has happened since my last newsletter and this edition will only catch you up on some of the many things the city has been doing. It is my New Year's resolution to get these newsletters out on a more frequent and regular basis. Time will tell how good I am at keeping this resolution.

While I am the elected representative for District 4, it is my intent that this newsletter be one that serves and informs all the residents of the city.

### **Single District Voting/New Districts**

One big change that has happened this past year is that the citizens of the city voted this past November to amend the city charter so that your various council members would be elected by the residents of the district that they represent. The Mayor will continue to be elected by the city at large. This means that in the coming election the residents of Districts 2 and 4 will only find the mayoral candidates on their ballot. Residents in Districts 3 and 5 will have their district candidates as well as the mayoral candidate.

The council adopted new district boundaries on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A number of homes have changed the district they were in. The redistricting was needed as over 50% of the homes and residents were located in District 4. The new boundaries more evenly allocated the number of residences within each district. Here is a link to the new [District Maps](#). You can zoom in on the map down to street level to see what district you now reside in.

### **Enterprise Resource Planning**

The city has begun implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. An ERP will provide the city a process that provides for the integration of various city functions in a single software suite. This will allow the city to integrate such functions as planning, purchasing, inventory control, preventative maintenance, finance, human resources, and permitting as well as other functions. To date the city has transitioned its finance, payroll/HR and procurement systems. When fully implemented, this system will make it easier for everyone doing business with the city, including residents, to make requests and for the city to process those requests. The implementation of the ERP is a major undertaking, but will position the city for future growth and make us more efficient and effective in carrying out its responsibilities. We are taking every effort to ensure the transition is smooth; however, we can expect a few bumps in the road, such as was recently experienced in the utility billing system. We ask for your patience as we move the city forward.

## Transportation

There has been a lot of activity throughout the city as regards different roads and projects. Below are the highlights on those projects.

### *State Route 50 Realignment*

Action has begun on constructing the SR 50 realignment with the initial purchase of some of the Right-of-Way needed and current commitment of \$23.9 million for Right-of-Way purchase and construction. These funds will focus on that segment of the realignment from Villa City Road to SR19. The city will continue to work with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization to secure additional funding to complete the alignment from SR19 East to SR33. It is estimated that it will take an additional \$20 million above what is currently committed to complete the project. The council is working with the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, District 5, for a more detailed briefing and project time line. It is expected that this presentation by FDOT will take place in February.

For those who may not be familiar with this project, the roadway plans designed by the FDOT include a new four-lane truck route with a grass median. The new alignment would begin on the west side of downtown Groveland where SR 50 currently separates into two pairs of one-way lanes. It would move the roadway north to a position three blocks north of Orange Avenue, where a new intersection with State Road 19 would be constructed. The new roadway would proceed east and then curve south to create a new intersection with State Road 33.

### *Trails*

There are three segments of the Central Florida Coast-to-Coast trail that are in the works for the city. The first of these is the South Lake Trail Phase 3B. This section will run from the current terminus at Silver Eagle Road and CR565A down CR565A to SR50 and then West along SR50 to Second Street (a few blocks west of Tractor Supply). The money has been allocated for the Right-of-Way purchase for this section of the trail. Surveys have been conducted and the state is currently in the process of obtaining the land.

The second section is South Lake Trail, Phase 3C. This section is to be constructed along with the construction of the SR50 realignment and will continue the trail from the Phase 3B terminus, as noted above, West to Villa City Road.

The third section is Phase 4. This phase will run from Villa City Road west through Mascotte. It is currently being designed.

In addition, the city is undertaking a variety of trail projects that will lead to spurs from the Coast-to-Coast trail to various locations within the city.

### *Florida Turnpike*

Florida's Turnpike Enterprise has begun work to widen the Turnpike from four to eight lanes from Minneola (Hancock Road) north to the northern ramps at US 27 just before Leesburg. The project includes converting the partial interchange at US 27 & SR 19 to a full interchange for access north as well as south. The project is being done in two phases. Phase one is the widening from

Minneola to the US27 & SR19 interchange. This work has begun and is scheduled for completion in 2024. The second phase is slated to begin in 2024 and be completed in 2026.

### *Crittenden Street*

The city is preparing to contract for the rehabilitation/resurfacing of the eastern end of Crittenden Street. Work is expected to begin in the next few months of that section of the road from the SR50 interchange Westward to just pass the Shell gas station.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The city recently completed a strategic parks and recreation plan. While the plan is still in draft form, the council will be using the information in that plan as they develop future parks in the city and update/upgrade existing parks. The strategic plan has also led to an effort to create a land development code section that will provide developers guidelines for neighborhood parks to ensure these parks are aligned with and support the city's Parks Master Plan.

As an initial benchmark, I am proposing that all developments be required to comply with Groveland's Comprehensive Plan level of service requirements for community and regional parks and neighborhood parks. What does this mean? First, all land dedications by a developer must be proportional to the residential development's anticipated impacts on the City's Park system. Second, all new development and redevelopment containing a residential component greater than 25 dwelling units, will plan, design, and build new neighborhood parks in accordance with the requirements of the Land Development Code (LDC).

How will this be done? My expectation is that when neighborhood parks are required, the Community Development Director will determine the number of acres to be reserved. Neighborhood parks would be required to meet an access standard which requires that they be located within a .5 mile walk of every resident along sidewalks or trails. The minimum size of a neighborhood park would be approximately 5 acres or as a size as approved by the Community Development Director in accordance with the Groveland's LDC and its Parks Master Plan. I recognize that a development may be required to have more than one neighborhood park in order to meet the service standards the city has adopted.

### *Cherry Lake Park*

As part of the parks and recreation master planning effort, the city contracted with Barth and Associates to create a new master plan for Cherry Lake Park. The previous plan had been developed when the size of the park was 20 acres. Thanks to the generosity of the developer, the park size is now slated to be 40+ acres. The development of such a large park must be done in phases. The first phase was budgeted for \$1.5 million and involved getting the basic infrastructure of water, sewer, street modifications and some basic amenities. The city is now preparing to start phase 2 of the project. For phase 2, the city has budgeted approximately \$3 million. For this, the city expects to add the following amenities to the park:

1. Destination Playground with Picnic and Shade
  2. Event Lawn Lined with Trees
  3. Gravel Drive with Partial Paved Parking and Drop Off
  4. Tree Allee with Seating
  5. Multi-Purpose Field, Doubles as Stormwater Collection
  6. Grass Overflow Parking
  7. Walks
- B. Trees and Landscaping



**Cherry Lake Park – Phase 2**

(Continued on page 5)



### *General Park Updates*

The parks master plan identified a number of areas where the city could improve its existing parks. Efforts are being undertaken this year to update at least three of the city's existing parks. The first is the Jimmy Thomas Memorial Park, where the city will update the restrooms, refresh the entertainment stand and possibly update the scoreboard. The second park is the Lake David Splashpad which will see the addition of some shade structures. Lastly will be the addition of restrooms at David Blanks Park on Gadson St.

At the present time, members of the city's Recreation Advisory Committee are continuing their efforts to do an assessment of each of the city's parks. Their assessment, coupled with the needs assessment of the parks and recreation master planning efforts, will help inform recommendations from the RAC on needed upgrades to each of the city's parks.

### **Kudos to City Staff During Covid**

If you have the chance, and you have gotten some great service from the city staff, I ask you take a moment to thank them. This past nearly two years has been as trying for them as it has for each of us in trying to deal with the limitations that COVID presented. I have been overwhelmed by the commitment of our staff to the city's core values of Service, Excellence and Integrity. Their commitment to these core values has allowed the city to continue to provide outstanding service to not only our residents but to all who have dealt with the city. So, from me I give them thanks for a job **Well Done!**

### **Upcoming Events**

The city has a scheduled events for every month of the year. Additionally, this is the year of the Centennial Celebration of Groveland. Most of these take place at Lake David Park. There is parking and the setting is absolutely gorgeous, so here are some events you can plan on attending over the next few months.

### *Centennial Celebration*

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Groveland. To celebrate this centennial year, a number of events have been planned, beginning with the Cultural Food Festival in January. From January through March, so watch the city postings for each month's event. The last event will be in April when the city looks forward to the next 100 years. This event is planned for Arbor Day, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### *Farmers Market*

The city hosts a Farmer's Market on the second Friday of each month at Lake David Park in downtown Groveland. The market marke runs from 5:00pm till 9:00pm. In addition to fresh produce from local farms, there are home-made crafts, live music and food trucks. Come down and enjoy a great evening at a beautiful park.

### *Groveland Centennial Cultural Food Festival*

The kick-off to our Centennial Celebration is the hosting of a Cultural Food Festival at Lake David Park on January 29<sup>th</sup> from 11 AM to 6 PM. For more information on this event please go to: <http://groveland-fl.gov/640/January-2022-Cultural-Food-Festival>.

*Groveland Centennial Celebration: 1922-1972*

For planning purposes, this event will be on February 26, 2022 from 11 AM to 8 PM at Lake David Park. Watch the city website and FaceBook page for more information.

**Got a Question?**

While this newsletter comes out multiple times during the year and I try to pass on information that I believe most residents would find of interest, I also realize I may not be answering all your questions. If you have a question about something going on in the city, please feel free to email it to me at [mike.smith@groveland-fl.gov](mailto:mike.smith@groveland-fl.gov). I will not only answer it for you in an email, but I will also consider adding your issue to a future edition of the newsletter.

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**Thank you for your interest in the city**

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This newsletter was created by G. L. Coleman